

DARK STAR

LOADING INSTRUCTIONS

Set up the Amstrad as detailed in the manual and load by pressing CONTROL and the ENTER key on the numeric key pad simultaneously, after releasing the two keys press PLAY. Dark Star will now load and auto run. Please note:- Dark Star is a very long program and will take some time to load.

PLAYING THE GAME

The Dark Star galaxy is divided into a 16 x 16 grid of sectors in the galactic plain.

The LIAR's battle computer generates a real time display on your screen which shows all activity in your immediate vicinity. As well as showing enemy ships and their missiles, this display will also show energy concentrations and Warp Gates to hyperspace. Energy concentrations are shown as pulsating blue squares; flying through these will enable LIAR to increase its supply of shield energy. Energy used to operate the ship's navigation and weaponry systems is generated by an internal energy source. The deflector screens will draw a large amount of energy if hit by an enemy missile.

LIAR's weaponry is of the fixed mount type, aimed by manoeuvring the ship. The point towards which LIAR is flying is marked on the display by the cursor. This is moved by using the up, down, left & right keys, while LIAR's velocity is altered using accelerate and decelerate. Pressing a fire key will release a burst of plasma bolts in the direction LIAR is flying, destroying any enemy ship or missile on that line.

Enemy ships will fire on the LIAR by prediction, so it is essential not to fly on the same course or speed for any length of time. The best way to avoid missiles being to rapidly change your velocity.

Moving from one sector to another requires you to make a transition to hyperspace. This is done by first finding a set of Warp Gates, which your battle computer sees and displays as four yellow squares changing shape as the Gates open and close, and then flying LIAR into one of these whilst it is open. The four gates are arranged in a North, South, East, West fashion such that you can select the direction you wish to move within the grid, by flying through the appropriate gate. If the

LIAR is in a sector at the edge of the grid one of the gates will be missing, or two if LIAR is in a corner sector.

The route through hyperspace is mapped out as a rectangular tunnel, down which you must guide the LIAR. Travelling outside of this tunnel puts a heavy load on your screens and uses much energy, so accurate flying is essential.

The Dark Star galaxy has planets in it. These can be investigated further by flying down onto their surfaces. This is achieved by flying directly up to a planet, as if on a collision course.

Your computer will then carry out a re-entry manoeuvre during which your screen will blank for an instant, as your sensors are blinded by the 'Liar' using its momentum to smash through the planetary shielding.

The surface of a planet occupied by enemy forces will be defended by anti-aircraft weaponry, raised above the surface on towers. These can be disabled by firing at the towers, which will collapse when hit. Certain areas of the planet are defended by force fields which will damage the 'Liar' if flown through. There are, however, holes in these fields which your computer will detect and display as rectangles. If you fly through these no energy will be lost. The enemy bases on the planets are hidden in the centre of a ring of defences, and are themselves protected by three towers. These bases generate the planetary defence shields, which must be rendered inoperative, by destroying all the bases on a planet, before the 'Liar' can return to space. Without the velocity attainable in space, the 'Liar' can never build up the momentum required to pass through these shields, so if you elect to go down onto a planet you cannot escape again until all the bases on it are destroyed. This feature can, however, be disabled from within the game option menus.

Pressing 'ESC' whilst on the surface of a planet will cause your computer to display a tactical map of the surface, showing defences, bases and fuel dumps. The 'Liar's' position and direction are denoted on the map by a white arrow. There is also an arrow displayed on the main screen to show 'Liar's' direction in respect to the map. Bases are shown as concentric rectangles, defences as shaded areas (density shows difficulty), fuel dumps as blue squares and spaceports as cyan diamonds.

You may leave a planet's surface and return to space by flying with maximum speed and maximum climb at the same time, though only after all the enemy bases have been destroyed.

Fuel dumps on the surface will consist of a number of energy

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